



December 3, 2004

Federal grand jury returns drug-trafficking, firearms indictments

On December 1, a federal grand jury returned five indictments in U.S. District Court, Providence, charging drug trafficking and firearms offenses in unrelated cases.

- **Dennis Steven Batista**, Date of Birth 5/02/75, 89 Ralph Street Providence, and **Lonnie C. Gasperini**, DOB 6/23/79, 70 Bloomingdale Avenue, Pawtucket, are charged in the same indictment with conspiracy to distribute heroin and distributing heroin within 1,000 feet of a school. Batista is also charged with eight counts of distributing heroin and Gasperini is charged with seven counts. **Providence Police** and the **Drug Enforcement Administration** conducted the investigation; Assistant U.S. Attorney Adi Goldstein is prosecuting the case.
- **Fernand Enrrique Punnett**, DOB 10/22/43, 1688 Westminster Street, #23, is charged with possessing with intent to distribute 50 grams or more of crack cocaine, one count of distributing crack cocaine, and two counts of distributing five grams or more of crack cocaine. The **Federal Bureau of Investigation** conducted the investigation; Assistant U.S. Attorney Goldstein is prosecuting the case.
- **Ryan Cardente**, DOB 12/16/81, 102 Ford Street, Providence, is charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm, a .380 caliber handgun. **Providence Police** and the **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)** conducted the investigation; Assistant U.S. Attorney Zechariah Chafee is prosecuting the case.

- **Eugenio Vasquez**, DOB 6/30/75, 25 Camden Avenue, Providence, is charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm, a nine-millimeter pistol. **Providence Police** and **ATF** conducted the investigation; Assistant U.S. Attorney Luis M. Matos is prosecuting the case.
- **Miguel Roman**, DOB 3/23/84, 560 Prospect Street, Pawtucket, is charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm, a nine-millimeter pistol. **Providence Police** and **ATF** conducted the investigation; Assistant U.S. Attorney Matos is prosecuting the case.

An indictment is merely an allegation and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. The statutory maximum penalties for the offenses charged are:

- conspiracy to distribute heroin and distributing heroin – 20 years imprisonment and a \$1 million fine;
- distributing heroin in a school zone – one to 40 years imprisonment and a \$2 million fine;
- possessing with intent to distribute 50 grams or more of crack cocaine – 10 years to life imprisonment and a \$4 million fine;
- distributing crack cocaine – 20 years imprisonment and a \$1 million fine;
- distributing five grams or more of crack cocaine – five to 40 years imprisonment and a \$2 million fine;
- being a felon in possession of a firearm – ten years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

All the defendants have detained since being arrested and will be brought into U.S. District Court for arraignment.

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